

For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE

Fort Bragg Forestry Branch

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Fort Bragg, NC – SUBJECT: Prescribed Burning Program on Fort Bragg

The Natural Resources Division of the Directorate of Public Works conducts prescribed burning operations on the installation every year. There are two seasonal windows: the first occurs during January and February, and is called “dormant-season burning”. The second is from mid-March to the end of June, and called “growing-season burning”.

Two main benefits from a dormant prescribed burn are; first, to assist in the control of damaging wildfires. Areas that have low forest fuel loads do not burn intensely during wildfire events and can be more easily controlled. Second, burning this time of year prevents brown spot disease which kills young longleaf pines.

The purpose of the growing-season burn is to improve and maintain the longleaf pine-wiregrass ecosystem that is dominant on the installation. Prescribed burning during this time of the year keeps the forest healthy by suppressing thick underbrush. Another benefit is the improvement of wildlife habitat. Areas that have been burned during this season produce an increased amount of tender ground vegetation that is utilized by numerous wildlife species such as deer, quail, and wild turkeys. The natural landscape of the Sandhills region was shaped from fires caused by lightning. The exclusion of these spring and early summer fires has consequently caused some species to become threatened or endangered. This ecosystem is very diverse and many species cannot exist without frequent growing-season fires to maintain their habitat.

Our Prescribed Burning Plan for 2006 has 12,890 acres scheduled to be burned during the dormant-season and 44,385 acres to be burned during the growing-season, for a total of 57,275 acres. Last year we accomplished burning 61,646 acres.

Burning will be conducted when weather conditions are most favorable to achieve the desired results. Burns will be distributed throughout the installation in order to conform with North Carolina Forestry Division smoke management guidelines. Every precaution will be used to minimize the impacts from smoke to sensitive areas and training operations.

Installation users and visitors benefit from the prescribed burning program. The heavy build-up of flammable fuels will be reduced, minimizing the possibility of destructive wildfires. In addition, there will be an increased abundance of wildflowers and wildlife habitat.

For more information contact John C. Ward, Fire Management Specialist, Forestry Branch, Natural Resources Division, Directorate of Public Works, (910) 396-2510, or our web site at <http://www.bragg.army.mil/NRD/fire.htm>.